

1.1 INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

The Downtown Development Plan is a tool that local governments use to implement their Comprehensive Plan and to guide development in a core downtown area. While the Comprehensive Plan is the primary guide for growth and development in a community, a Downtown Development Plan is able to focus on the unique characteristics of the downtown area by customizing the planning process and land use regulations to that area.

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Downtown Development Plan is to create a unique and identifiable downtown for Frederick that is an economically vibrant, pedestrian-oriented destination attracting both the local community and visitors. This Downtown Development Plan will be used as a tool that the Town of Frederick can use to guide development in the downtown area. While the Comprehensive Plan is the primary guide for growth and development within Frederick, this Downtown Development Plan focuses on the downtown area in more detail, organizing land use and zoning regulations by district.

This Downtown Development Plan seeks to establish a direct connection between the Town of Frederick's Comprehensive Plan and revitalization opportunities within downtown Frederick. An overall goal is the orderly development of downtown Frederick in a method consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and, more specifically, with the community's vision developed through the Frederick Downtown Development Plan public outreach process.

INTENT

The intent of the Downtown Development Plan is to create public policy that facilitates and encourages development and improvements which help realize the community's vision for the downtown area. The community wants a downtown that is vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, family-oriented, and alive with entertainment, housing, retail, and recreational activities. In addition, it wants to capitalize on its proximity to the Denver metro area by attracting families in search of an affordable lifestyle and weekend tourists seeking a temporary respite from the City.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Frederick was incorporated in 1907 and started off as a mining town attracting immigrants from Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, several Slavic countries, and Latin America. Due to its location in the Denver-Julesburg Basin (DJ Basin), the ground beneath Frederick contains significant deposits of subsurface natural gas, oil, coal and other minerals. Even though the last coal mines ceased production in Frederick in 1969, underground formations are also the primary source

of natural gas. Within the DJ Basin's most productive area is the Wattenberg field. As the state's second-largest oil and gas field, the Wattenberg field covers parts of Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, Larimer and Weld counties. Its nearly 12,000 oil and gas wells supply about 30 percent of the natural gas consumed by Front Range homes and businesses. Downtown Frederick sits over abandoned coal mines. Subsidence issues are prevalent and the Town requires special study whenever a new proposed use comes forward.



Figure 1-1: Miners' Memorial

The collective close-knit communities of Frederick, Firestone, and Dacono are commonly referred to as the Tri-Town area or “Carbon Valley” due to their development in the early 1900s as mining towns (*Figure 1-1*). Today, although they function as independent towns, the communities do share some municipal services such as fire protection, parks and recreation, raw and treated water supplies, the sanitary sewer system, and the local library.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN BOUNDARY

The Downtown Development Plan area is composed of roughly 62 acres. The project area is bordered by Colorado Boulevard to the west, Third Street to the North, and Seventh Street to the South. The eastern boundary is staggered and ranges from Frederick Way to Locust Street depending on the area of the plan.

1.2 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This Downtown Development Plan is composed of seven chapters and an Executive Summary. Portions of this document are organized by district to be more user-friendly. For instance, “Chapter 3: Land Use Regulations and Zoning” is organized by district, and contains information regarding each district’s vision, land use information, development standards, and design guidelines for private property. The chapters are briefly described as follows:

1. **Introduction and Background:** Chapter 1 discusses the purpose, intent, and organization of this document. It describes the project area boundaries, the community meeting process associated with this project, and outlines this plan’s relationship to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and other documents relevant to the Downtown Development Plan area.

2. **Existing Conditions:** Chapter 2 summarizes existing conditions within the study area on topics such as: Existing transportation issues, urban design conditions, land uses, historical resources, and economic conditions.
3. **Land Use Regulations and Zoning:** Using a regulating plan with districts as a zoning framework, this chapter addresses allowable land uses and site development standards (such as height, setback, and parking). This chapter also provides direction for private property such as guidance for site planning and design, parking lot design and screening, building design and architectural character, building massing and articulation, lighting, screening utilitarian aspects of buildings, landscape and hardscape, and signage.
4. **Public Improvements, Design Standards, and Recommendations:** This section provides direction for public improvements for the entire plan area. Topics include: downtown entry-ways and downtown identity, public plazas and urban parks, parking lot design, and street design treatments such as street trees, lighting, street furnishings, crosswalks, public art, and public right-of-way landscaping.
5. **Mobility, Transit, Circulation, and Parking:** Chapter 5 describes and provides solutions for mobility issues such as truck traffic, traffic calming, intersection treatments, pedestrian circulation, bike systems, and public transit. This chapter also outlines how the Downtown Development Plan will affect downtown parking.
6. **Infrastructure:** Chapter 6 summarizes the conditions of the infrastructure and public facilities in the Downtown Development Plan area. Subjects addressed will include: Water supply, sewer and wastewater, solid waste, drainage, police and fire protection, schools, and parks.
7. **Implementation:** This chapter will recommend strategic public improvements and identify key catalyst projects and programs needed to make the Downtown Development Plan vision a reality. Priorities, phasing, potential funding mechanisms, persons responsible for implementation items, and administration of the Downtown Development Plan document are all defined by this chapter. Also discussed are investment incentives, retail recruitment strategies, and business organization programs for creating and maintaining a vibrant downtown retail environment.

1.3 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of the Frederick Downtown Development Plan is to provide a clear understanding of the vision that the community has created for development in downtown Frederick. This document will be used by property owners, governing bodies, and Town staff as a set of regulations containing district-specific land use policy, development standards and design guidelines for future development. In addition, the Downtown Development Plan sets the framework for future capital improvement projects. These actions will improve the quality of the urban environment as well as streamline the design review process.

When using this document,

- One should first reference the Chapters 1 and 2 (Introduction and Background, and Existing Conditions, respectively) to get a picture of the overall vision and background for the Downtown Development Plan area.
- For important information concerning specific parcels, refer to Chapter 3: Land Use Regulations and Zoning. When using the Design Guidelines in Chapter 3, first look at the area-wide sections then refer to the specific district in which the property in question lies. All of the information in this chapter including the allowable land uses, development standards, and design guidelines are organized by district. There are a total of two districts in the Plan.
- Chapter 4 outlines guidelines for improvements within the Town right of way such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. Items such as street furnishings, urban design improvements, plazas, and public signs are addressed. Though these are generally oriented to public property, some of these recommended improvements may be implemented as a part of private development.
- Chapter 5 outlines the strategy for street improvements and transit.
- Chapter 6 provides a general overview of the existing sewer, water, utility, public safety, and public facility infrastructure of the Town, and outlines guidelines for improvements that will occur to accommodate the built-out conditions.
- Finally, Chapter 7 provides guidance for implementing recommendations of the Downtown Development Plan and thus will be used by the Town and the development community to implement various public improvement projects, programs, and policies within downtown Frederick. This Chapter also identifies incentives to promote revitalization, business organization, and retail recruitment strategies.

1.4 REGIONAL CONTEXT

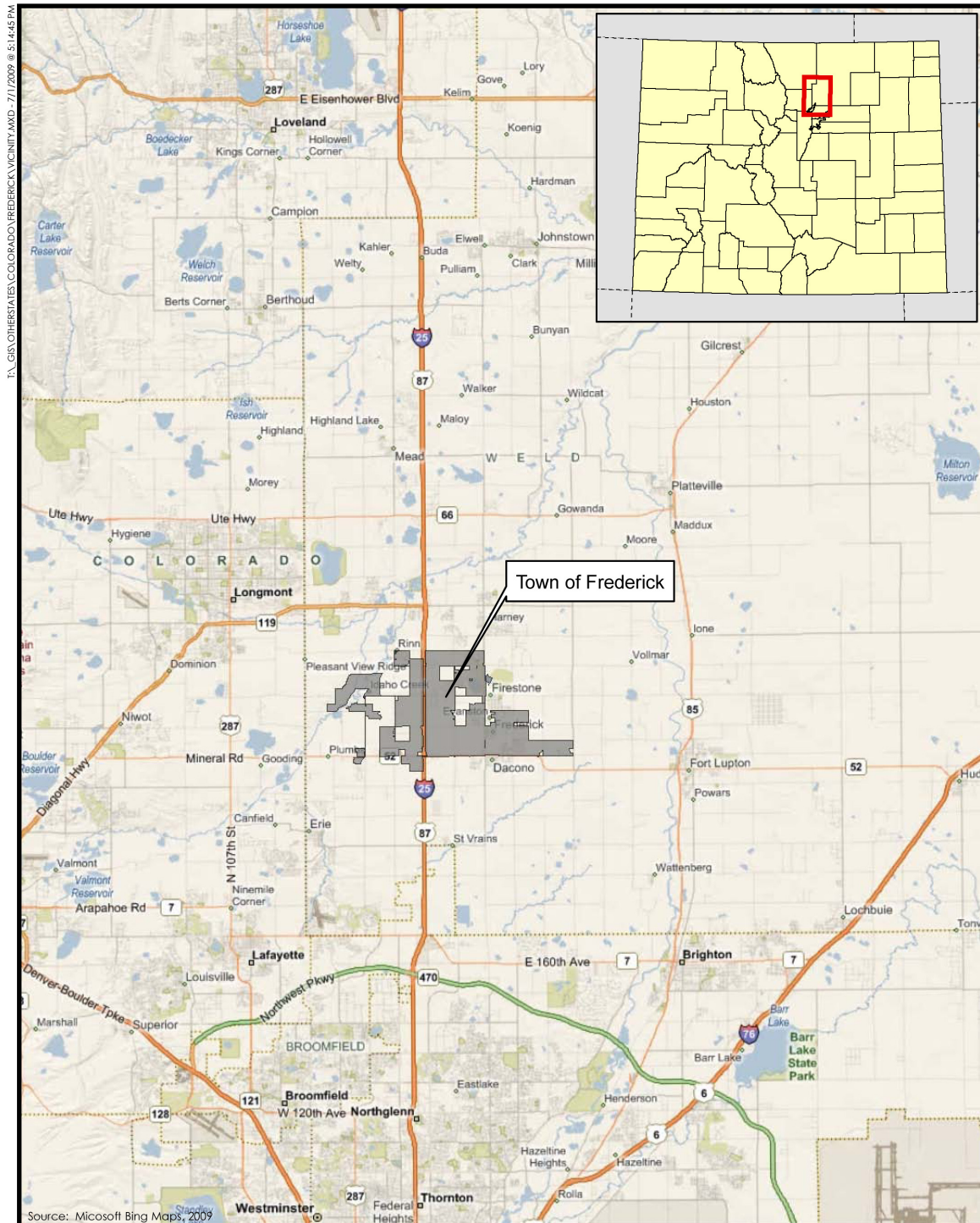


Figure 1-2: Regional vicinity map

Frederick is a family-oriented small town located approximately 30 miles north of downtown Denver (*Figure 1-2*). As a metro area “bedroom community,” many residents commute each day to Denver for work. As of the 2000 census, the Town had a total population of 2,467. The Town’s estimated population as of December 2008 was 8,081 and the diversity of race and age has grown since the 2000 Census.

Within the Downtown Development Plan area, 5th Street runs through the heart of the downtown central business district. This street has been the traditional east/west axis of the downtown since its inception. Colorado Boulevard delineates the western boundary of the Downtown Development Plan area, and is one of the main north/south transportation corridors for the Town. Historically, a railroad also ran parallel to Colorado Boulevard and provided freight service to and from Denver. Although currently undergoing gateway/entry improvements, 5th Street historically lacked visibility from Colorado Boulevard which was the main route into Town, often resulting in difficulty attracting first-rate businesses. Vacant storefronts, businesses in dire need of façade improvements, and inconsistent front setbacks compound the revitalization and reinvestment challenges for downtown Frederick.

1.5 COMMUNITY MEETING PROCESS

FEBRUARY 7TH, 2008 OPEN HOUSE

Prior to the selection of PMC as the consultant for the Downtown Development Study, the Town held an Open House so that the community could discuss the upcoming revitalization project for downtown Frederick. At this initial event, the Town requested citizen input on the following issues: defining the plan area boundary; defining what kind of businesses should be encouraged in downtown Frederick; defining the downtown’s character; outlining available tools for revitalization; and developing design guidelines and standards. In addition, the Town used the opportunity to encourage local citizens to apply for positions on the Ad Hoc Committee.

SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2008 MINERS DAY OUTREACH

During the month of September, PMC worked on designing three customized public outreach activities for the Miners Day festival including a “heart of the community” exercise, a storefront design Visual Preference Survey (VPS), and a written land use survey. Throughout this process, PMC coordinated closely with Frederick’s Planning Director Jennifer Simmons to ensure that the event activities would yield constructive results for Frederick.



Figure 1-3: Miners Day

On Miners Day (*Figure 1-3*), the PMC Consultant Team and Planning Director Jennifer Simmons conducted public outreach activities at the festival where they received feedback from over 120 members of the general public regarding the future vision for downtown Frederick. Overall, this event was enormously successful and yielded a wealth of information that proved highly beneficial during the development of the Plan.

NOVEMBER 13TH, 2008 MEETING WITH YOUTH COMMISSION

PMC and Planning Director Jennifer Simmons met with seven members of the Town of Frederick Youth Commission to brainstorm ideas for the future vision of downtown Frederick. Commission members were first shown a PowerPoint summarizing Miners Day public outreach results. Next, they were asked to complete a written survey on topics such as their impressions of the community, recreation and entertainment options for youth, community walkability, and what kind of future improvements and businesses they would like to see in the downtown.

NOVEMBER 13TH AND 14TH, 2008 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

PMC conducted approximately 20 stakeholder interviews with local citizens. The majority of the interviews were done in person, but a handful had to be conducted via telephone due to interviewee schedule constraints.

Topics covered during the interviews included: impressions of Frederick; downtown expansion; positive and negative attributes of the downtown; future streetscape improvements; future businesses; case studies of neighboring downtowns; and revitalization challenges. In particular, one question asked stakeholders whether the downtown was large enough to accommodate the community's expected growth over the next 25 years. Most respondents felt that the geographic area of the downtown needs to be expanded beyond the current size of the district.

FEBRUARY 19, 2009 COMMUNITY FORUM

Planning Director Jennifer Simmons and PMC held a public forum on the Downtown Development Plan on February 19, 2009. There were approximately 30 community members in attendance. During this event, a summary of the economic scan completed by Natelson Dale was presented, and the draft Vision Plan was unveiled to the public for feedback. Public comment topics ranged from a discussion of the proposed downtown expansion area and its relationship to the proposed high school site, to questions about the proposed skating rink. At this event, development constraints including the realignment of 5th Street, the chosen site for the new high school, and oil/gas facilities and setbacks prevented the expansion of the downtown to the west of Colorado Boulevard eventually led to a complete revision of the Plan which omitted any westward expansion of the downtown, and instead re-oriented future development efforts to the east along 5th Street.

VARIOUS AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

In addition to the initial Ad Hoc Committee member interviews (Ad Hoc Meeting #1) that were conducted as part of the larger stakeholder process, PMC has facilitated a total of three other Ad Hoc Committee meetings since project inception. The first meeting was held on November 14, 2008 for the purpose of discussing the "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" (SWOT) analysis findings. Additional meetings on February 5th and July 6th, 2009 focused on selecting and refining the preferred Vision Plan for downtown Frederick.